

THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT

Vol. XII

SEPTEMBER 1957

No. 135

CONTENTS

| | | |
|----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----|
| EDITORIAL | | 98 |
| THE ANGELS OF DANTE | Georgina Grace Moncrieff | 102 |
| ANGELS IN SCRIPTURE | Rosemary Heddon | 111 |
| TOO GOOD TO BE USED | Thomas Gilby | 117 |
| ST AUGUSTINE'S SERMON ON PSALM XXXIII: I | Edmund Hill | 122 |
| COMMENTS: 1. | The Mass as a Drama | 131 |
| 2. | Evening Mass in a Vermont Village | 133 |
| 3. | Bad effects of Bad Traditions | 135 |
| 4. | The Mass and the Rosary | 136 |
| POINT OF VIEW | Valerie Pitt | 137 |
| REVIEWS: Victor White, Murdoch Scott, Dominic Sire | | 139 |

Contributors are encouraged to submit original MSS. or translations from the Fathers. *Literary Communications* to be addressed to The Editor, The Life of the Spirit, Hawkesyard Priory, Rugeley, Staffs. (Telephone: Armitage 240.) The Editor cannot be responsible for the loss of MSS. submitted, and no MS. will be returned unless accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope. *Subscriptions, Orders* and *Communications* regarding *Advertisements* should be addressed to the Manager, Blackfriars Publications, 34 Bloomsbury Street, London, W.C.1 (Museum 5728). Annual Subscription 25s. od. (\$3.50) post free. *Binding*: Orders and Enquiries for binding volumes of the review may be sent to the Kemp Hall Bindery, 33 St Aldate's, Oxford.

EDITORIAL

MUCH controversy goes on over the debatable question of vernacular in the Mass and there is a growing body of opinion, more marked perhaps among the laity than among the clergy, that the introduction of at least a considerable measure of it is a reform both desirable and overdue. The supreme authority of the Church is evidently keenly solicitous in the matter of liturgical reform, as is evidenced by the approval extended to recent Liturgical Congresses, notably that of Assisi last year, and also by changes of great moment in the liturgy of Holy Week and in the laws governing the fast before Communion. Yet is this matter of vernacular in the Roman Mass the steps ekatn hitherto by authority have been of a very limited nature, and in the eyes of some disappointingly conservative.

We are publishing this month a number of COMMENTS and a POINT OF VIEW which serve to illustrate, and in one case to call in question, the central thesis of an article by Fr Conrad Pepler, O.P., *Latin is still practical*, which appeared in our June number. The thesis of this article was that the Mass is a Mystery; it is *the* Mystery of our Redemption, one and the same sacrifice as that of Calvary. It is therefore, before all else, something we *do* and something that God does; not something we say and that God says to us. The liturgy must needs use words and language, but its language is subsidiary to what it does, and the heart of its mystery lies not in the words but in the sacramental action, in the showing of the Lord's death till he come.

It is the penetration into and realization of this mystery of our Redemption by the grace of the Holy Spirit that constitutes the essential element in the part played by God's People in the offering of the Mass. In this offering the words are integral to the action because by them the meaning that the Church, under divine guidance, gives its action and puts upon the lips of priest and people, is made manifest. And it is the meaning that must be entered into and penetrated; the actual words will effect this only in accordance with the capacity of each individual to transmute them into meaning; and even then, until we gain the vision

of God, we shall never wholly penetrate into and make our own the fullness of that meaning.

It is unfortunately true that to a very grievous extent many of our Catholic people have lost the sense of the meaning of the Mass and of the profundity of its mystery. This has been due, not so much to the unintelligibility of the Latin language, as to the fact that owing to a variety of historical circumstances, of which a dead language is only one, the people have been cut off from active participation in and connection with what is being done at the altar when Mass is offered. It is no doubt true, and it is a fact that partisans of the liturgical movement are apt to overlook, that in the past the average well-instructed Catholic united himself silently but actively in the offering of Mass by the use of the rosary or *The Garden of the Soul*, and that today he does so by an increased use of the missal. But it is unfortunately also true that the level of instructed religious practice is, on the average, much lower than it formerly was, and that there are today many thousands present in our churches who are ignorant of the elements of their religion, and in particular of the meaning of the sacrifice they are there to offer.

In this way a tendency has grown among them to regard the Mass as something done by the priest on their behalf but without their active assistance. They themselves, meanwhile, are occupied to a greater or lesser extent with prayers and devotions which, though doubtless remotely connected with what the priest is about, are far from that close and corporate co-operation with him which the liturgy itself envisages and which leads to intimate union with Christ in his sacrifice. For the less devout and assiduous it is an easy step from this to regard the Mass, somewhat superstitiously, as a kind of incantation to secure the beneficent effect of which bodily presence and a minimum of attention will suffice. So the profound sense of the mystery of Redemption enshrined in the Holy Sacrifice not seldom becomes impoverished, and in some cases is almost wholly lost sight of.

For this reason it is a putting of the cart before the horse, to say the least of it, to imagine that a mere change of language would in any way help to restore or strengthen this deep sense of the Mass as the mystery of Redemption. The language of the Sacred Mysteries translated into the vernacular would have as

little meaning for those who have wholly or partially lost this sense as does the incomprehensible Latin. What is needed is a recovery of the sense of Worship and Adoration. If we interpret the intention of the Church in the liturgical reforms lately initiated and urged upon us we shall see that it is precisely this that is their primary aim. The object of the new Holy Week and Easter rites is to induce in the faithful a deeper insight into the meaning of the mystery of Redemption by a closer and more actual participation in the drama of Christ's Passion and Resurrection.

The same is true of the liturgical celebration of the Sunday Mass in our parish churches. The Holy See, since the days of St Pius X, has been urging upon the faithful with increasing insistence their duty to pray the Mass, to familiarize themselves with the integral parts of the liturgical action, and at least the general sense of the words that accompany each part, and to follow the actions of the priest and make the offering *with* him. It is not difficult, even for the most unlettered to do this and to learn the meaning of the simple dialogues, the *Dominus vobiscum*, *Sursum Corda*, *Sanctus* and *Agnus Dei*, and even to grasp the import of the *Gloria* and *Credo*. And this active participation will effect a sense of unity and community which will enable all by God's grace to penetrate into and make their own the meaning of what they are about.

This penetration into the mystery of what Christ our Lord has wrought for us upon Calvary and what in his risen and ascended life he does for us in the sacramental life of his Mystical Body of which the Mass is centre and source, will produce in us a heightened sense of sin. A heightened sense of sin will prove to us more and more completely our utter dependence on God's providence, and a vivid realization of our utter dependence upon God will bring us truly to our knees in humble worship and adoration.

There is, as Fr Conrad Pepler pointed out in his article, a true place for vernacular in the Mass. It is in that part of the liturgy which is instructional; in the lessons, epistles and gospels. Holy Scripture, as we have been at pains to emphasize in the last two numbers of THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT, embodies the revelation of God's plan to save mankind from the results of human sin. It

sets out this plan of salvation as it was announced by the original apostolic preaching, the proclamation of which it is the office of the Church to continue unceasingly. The Scriptures therefore have a claim to be read in English in their liturgical place in the Mass. They might also be admitted to a place as an integral part of services subsidiary to the Mass, on lines similar to the Breviary lessons. They should be expounded, too, by systematic preaching, in such a way that all the faithful may have the opportunity of hearing and understanding them; for they and they alone are the source from which, under the guidance of God's Church, the Word of salvation is drawn.

* * * *

The annual Conference of THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT will be held at Spode House, September 25th to 28th. The theme of the Conference is BIBLE AND WORSHIP, the connection between Scripture and Liturgy; and the need for a deeper understanding of the scriptural foundations of the Liturgy, upon which can be built up a living community worship, drawing its inspiration from the Word of God and penetrating the whole of life.

The speakers will deal with particular applications of this theme as follows: George Ineson (of the Taena community) on LITURGY IN THE LAY COMMUNITY; Mrs A. H. Armstrong on BIBLE, LITURGY AND FAMILY; Mrs Nicolette Gray on READING THE BIBLE; Fr Edmund Hill, O.P., on THE PSALMS IN DAILY LIFE; Fr Gabriel Reidy, O.F.M., on THE BREVIARY AND THE LAITY.

Those wishing to attend the Conference should apply to the Warden, Spode House, Hawkesyard Priory, Rugeley, Staffs. (Tel. Armitage 331) who will give information about means of travel. The fee for the Conference is £2 7s. 6d., of which a deposit of 10s. should be sent in advance as booking fee.

THE ANGELS OF DANTE

GEORGINA GRACE MONCRIEFF

TO trace the angelology of Dante back to all its sources would be an exacting task for a scholar. His mind was like a crystal; strong, and exquisitely polished, and reflecting light from many facets. From two books, however, much of this light came, and from their gift he found the luminous material with which he clothed his angels. These books are the Bible, and the works of the supposed Dionysius the Areopagite. The Bible is, of course, the supreme authority for any conception of the angelic nature—the 'Master-Light of all our seeing', the Force that moulds even when most unrecognized, and Dante's imagination no doubt found its prime source of inspiration there. The first thing we learn, however, is that angels are never *described* in the Old Testament. But Dante describes his angels minutely. They are all beauty, and Kerr Bain's comment on some of Bunyan's Shining Ones applies equally here: 'Everything demands that these visitants should come into view in something of a human aspect.'

Dante's angels 'do God's commandments'—they 'hearken unto the voice of his word'. (And with Dionysius, as in the Old Testament, angelic individuality is entirely subservient to the Divine.) They are equally intent on their ever-present home in the Empyrean, and on carrying out the decrees of God. This quality appears in its less amiable form in the one Messenger of God in the Inferno, whom Mrs Jameson (*Sacred and Legendary Art*) describes as 'quite unmindful of his worshipper, as one occupied by higher matters', and whom she classifies as an angel of a specially severe type, following the tradition of the Greek and Italian mosaics—whereas Dante's other angels rather form than follow a tradition. This angel is the one who comes to open the city of Dis (*Inf.* ix—73, 103). He comes, disdaining to make use of his wings, dispersing the gross air with a gesture of infinite disgust and weariness—without pity, without even interest—entirely a foreigner to sin. Thus Dante depicts the attitude of a pure being who is neither human nor divine, when brought in

contact with the mystery of evil, as though to show us that if we make our bed in Hell God can meet us there, but angels cannot.

But in the later books of the *Commedia* the Angels are in their true element. Their holiness there is full of sympathy, free from scorn, and each one is delicately delineated and dipped in the colours of the daybreak. First singly, and then in dazzling groups, they assist at the development of a human soul.

It was on the anniversary of the death of Beatrice that Dante drew his angel on a tablet ('Dante once prepared to paint an angel') and this suggests that the Angel-Pilot was possibly in his mind at the time—'Israel de Egypto' being, Dean Plumtre tells us, one of the psalms used in the burial of the dead.

(*Purg.* II—13, 51). The Angel approaches gradually, yet very swiftly, as though impelled by a great purpose. The whole passage is full of movement, swiftness, lightness, whiteness—this Angel giving very specially the impression of being ever at rest in the Emyrean while he fulfils his task. His speed in returning, after the spirits are disembarked, is a measured speed, corresponding to that with which he came, and does not show haste, but rather the reposeful motion of the Eternal Circles. His brow is pure as that of his charges will be when their purification is accomplished, and when the Beatitudes have become their own. His garments and wings are white beyond any earthly comparison. His wings, unlike those of the Messenger in the *Inferno*, are very prominent, and carry the whole boat onward. Virgil tells Dante to kneel and fold his hands, as though to confess himself an unwinged creature.

'The lightness of the wings', says Dionysius, denotes their being in no respect earthly, but undefiledly and lightly raised to the sublime.' The boat is as light as the Angel. The precious freight of souls is so light as to be without value, without even existence, to the materialist. The Angel, whose coming had been likened to the dawning of Mars, signs them with the Cross, and leaves them to their Battle.

(*Purg.* VIII—22, 94, 108, 142). In the two Angels who guard the Valley of the Kings, there is impetuous yet measured movement, like that of soldiers under some invisible discipline. The whole conception of the scene is military. The mere fact that the angels are two in number makes it possible to call up some faint shadowy

image of rank and file. They are called 'Heavenly Falcons'—the Bird-Similitude being, in this case, less dependent on wings, and more on trained vigilance. Each is armed with a flaming sword, unlike the Cherub at the entrance of Eden, who appears to wield one tremendous weapon of flame. But the two swords of Dante's militant angels are sufficiently awe-inspiring, and that their points are blunted makes little difference to the impressiveness of the spectacle. The Angels themselves have the quality of fire, which, according to Dionysius, 'manifests itself suddenly . . . as it were by a sort of seeking, and again flying away impalpably, undiminished in all the joyful distributions of itself'. But, though soldierly in action, they are almost childlike in aspect, as, with bright hair, and garments green as the earliest leaves, they come from Mary's bosom. 'Green', says Dionysius, (though here in reference to precious stones) 'denotes the youthful and the full-grown'—and these angels attain this double symmetry, poised in perfect youth, yet mature to do the Will of God.

(*Purg.* ix—78, 145). In contrast with these, and with the Angel-Pilot, the Angel of Penance, seated in absolute repose on the threshold of diamond, seems to partake of its stability.

Dante tells us that his imagery is about to become more complex—so here we have the only Angel who is also a symbol. He typifies the Priesthood, and is majestic as an angel, majestic as a priest. His garments are the colour of dust and ashes, showing his complete sympathy with 'the frailty of our frame'. Where others relieve, his duty is to inflict—and so he is armed with a naked sword, portentous as that of the Rebuking Angels in the Bible and of which Dante cannot bear the dazzling brightness, compared, as in the case of no other angelic implement, with the unbearable splendour of the face. He is the only angel who asks a string of questions. His manner is curt, authoritative, remote. But he is placable and wise, in receiving, as in dealing with penitents. A word of explanation is enough, and when he learns why the usual Angel-Escort has been replaced by Virgil, he welcomes the travellers with liberality, and accords to Dante the gift for which he is responsible—a fulfilled penitence, and an abundant entrance on the way of purification. We see Dante at his feet—thus fulfilling St Peter's requirement—beating his breast, begging for mercy—and it is only then that the Sword of

the Angel makes the Seven Wounds on his forehead, and that the golden and silver keys unlock the door which, in rolling back, mingles its resonance with the music of the *Te Deum*, heard from within.

(*Purg.* xii—76, 99). The Angel who erases the Wound of Pride is, of all, the most human, the most lovable. He recalls the sweetness of Piccarda, and the ineffable simplicity of the Souls in the Moon who though, like her, triumphantly enjoying their crowns in Heaven, are still touched with the very human shadow of the Earth. 'Angels have wisdom in proportion as they have innocence', says Swedenborg, and his gesture as he opens both arms and wings—the arms for help, the wings for healing—is strangely innocent, and full of impulsive, almost maternal, tenderness—with even perhaps a hint of the Divine pity. 'Open thine arms and take me in', says Charles Wesley—and the attitude is utterly evangelical. This wealth of welcome corresponds to the occasion, which is a special one, as we learn from the effect on Dante's general powers which results from the removal of the Root-Sin.

That the giving way of Pride, or Self, inaugurates a new stage in the Soul's history is an ethical conception, which is thus expressed by von Hügel—'As in all deep religion there is here an heroic *willing* at work to effect a genuine displacement of the centre-object of interest: the system from being instinctively man-centred, becomes a freely-willed God-centredness'. And the Angel who stands Sponsor for the Soul as it enters on these wider regions is gifted with the concern of Motherhood without its suffering. In his face—unlike the dazzling glory of all the others—the Morning-Star

The firstborn of the Day,

The first shy Child of Dawn,

quivers tremulously, and his voice is haunted with regret that so few come to him to be served and cherished.

A dream of Humility could hardly be more fittingly embodied, and is well followed by the First Beatitude enshrined in music beyond the power of speech to describe.

(*Purg.* xv—10, 39). The next Angel is very slightly described. His wings, with their healing touch, are not mentioned. The only point given emphasis to is the blazing splendour of his light, of

which Dante finds the mere reflection from the ground almost unbearable. The connection may be with the blindness which is part of the punishment of the Envious, and with the long pre-occupation of their eyes, when in full operation, with the things that love the dark. In addition to the Second Beatitude, the Voices sing 'Rejoice, thou Conqueror', as though to assign to the victory over Envy a special reward, of which fulness of light is a worthy emblem.

(*Purg.* xvii—40, 69). Curiously elusive, the very light that veils him striking as through sleep—the movement of the wing almost the ghost of a movement—the 'Angel of Peace' baffles Dante's passionate desire to see him face to face, as though to add the last fine finish to the lesson of self-restraint. This becomes the more noticeable when contrasted with the unsolicited and providential gift of upward direction with which, while himself hidden, he actually meets the longing of the Poet.

Line 58 ('He acts for us as a man acts for himself') reminds us that Guardian Angels were believed to have the power of assuming the form of their charge ('It is his angel', Acts xii—15)—an interesting variation from the power of sinking the personality in God which has been already noticed. And it reminds us also of (*Carmina Gadelica*) 'The shepherding kind of the fold of the Saints', of the Guardian Angel invoked by Celtic Catholics—

'Be thou a bright flame before me—
Be thou a guiding star above me—
Be thou a smooth path below me—
And be a kindly shepherd behind me
Today, tonight, and for ever.'

Virgil even calls him a 'Divine Spirit', and this may contain some allusion to the comfort and care of God who supplies our need before we pray. It appears in this case, for the first time, to be the Angel himself who utters the Beatitude—thus gathering up in himself, and magnifying, the authority of the Unseen World.

'The Angel of Peace who went with me, who showed me everything that is hidden', says the Book of Enoch, and by this Angel though himself hidden, the Hidden Things are not kept secret but revealed.

'The Spirit of the hoar-frost is his own angel'—and that the

Angel of Canto XIX is likened to a Swan (*Purg.* XIX—42, 52) tempts to a comparison with Mallarmé's strange sonnet, alluring and mysterious, where the Spirit of the Ideal in the form of a great white Swan might be named the 'Angel of Frost'—so pure, yet so dreary and hopeless. Though far from any medieval intention, there attach themselves to this modern conception of Frustration many of the characteristics of Accidie, the Sin of the Devout. The Swan, formed for grace and energy, is set in ice, the wings frozen, impotent of movement, in an atmosphere heavy with disillusionment, struggle, disdain—fixed in the 'weariness' and 'sterility' of Winter.

Dante's Angel, who heals the sin, is far removed from struggle—framed in granite, he gleams upon the poets, peculiarly clear and distinct and calm in contrast with its tormented gloom. His whole bearing is superbly free from Sloth. His wings are at liberty. They part the air with celestial graciousness as they do their beautiful work. Every movement is instinct with freedom, strength, 'Divine contentment', and his voice, the index in a special manner of the sin which it is his mission to erase, is 'soft and sweet, as we never hear it in this mortal region'. The note of Mastery is again in his rendering of the Beatitude which might be interpreted—'Blessed are they that mourn—for their soul shall tread down comfort'.

(*Purg.* xxxii). With a certain disdain, which recalls Virgil's allusion to the Neutrals ('Do not speak of them, but look and pass on'), Dante does not mention the name of the sin cleansed in the Fifth Circle. Even the Angel is only a recollection, and is not described. That the love of money hardly occurred to him as a temptation can be easily believed. The Fourth Beatitude is divided between this Circle and the next—the portion for money lovers, 'Blessed are the thirsty', recalling one of the reputed sayings of our Lord—'I found all men drunken, and none found I athirst among them.' Book of Enoch: 'And in that place I saw a fountain of righteousness which was inexhaustible: around it were many fountains of wisdom, and all the thirsty drank of them and were filled with wisdom, and had their dwellings with the righteous and holy and elect.'

'Blessed are those who hunger *with balance*—who are so illuminated by Grace that the sense of Taste does not unduly

predominate.' (*Purg.* XXIV—133, 154). So runs the Beatitude for the conquerors of the sin of Gluttony. The other senses are made delicately prominent in the description of the scene—especially those of smelling and hearing—as when the Angel, rose-red as glass or metal in a furnace, shines with so lucent a radiance as to destroy Dante's power of sight so that he must follow by sound—and as when the Angel's wing, symbol of a healing sensitive touch on the soul, Herald of the Dawn, all perfume and fragrance, fittingly erases the trace of this most despicable of sins. The Angel sheds abroad ambrosia and a tender touch, hinting that the Soul, once purified, is given to eat of the Hidden Manna, without fear of intemperance or satiety. And the appearance of the Angel gives a touch of austerity to his sweetness which, in the cure of this sin, might naturally be looked for. His colour—unique among the angels—transports our thoughts straightway to the red splendour of Mars—unique among the planets (*Par.* xiv—86, 108)—and to the vision of the Cross in Paradise, to which Dante responded by a holocaust, a sacrifice, of praise. And thus the Angel who caresses the sin into oblivion with the rapture-laden breezes of the Rose of Sharon embodies also the Fight—the Furnace—by which bodily passions are subdued.

(*Purg.* XXVII—6, 15-55, 63). But the accepted purgatorial emblem is reserved for the final Circle—where the emancipation gained by Dante in passing through the flames recalls in a very definite manner the last scene of the *Pilgrim's Progress* when Christian and Hopeful pass through the River. Two angels guard the flames on the hither side and beyond, and—in warning as well as welcoming—remind us that Bunyan also introduced an Angel of Discipline far on in his Pilgrimage—after the Delectable Mountains, and near the Land of Beulah. These two angels are very slightly described. The first is visible—the second is all light and sound. Both, like the rose-red Angel, have a delicately austere quality—the first in singing 'Blessed are the pure in heart', indicating clearly that such heart-purity can only be attained by enduring the Fire: the second, while summing up all blessedness in the 'Come, ye blessed of my Father', still says '*Hasten*'—showing that the mere purging away of Evil is only a beginning—that with the inheriting of the Kingdom effort and assimilation are necessary—that goodness, to have free play, must be absorbed

and become native. It is left uncertain which Angel erases the final 'P' from Dante's brow, or whether this is done by the Fire itself.

In this whole beautiful passage the position of Virgil is both touching and tragic—whether we liken him to Hopeful (though without hope for himself) 'keeping his brother's head above water', and encouraging him by describing what he sees on the other side—or whether we compare him with the two Shining Men who accompany the pilgrims to the margin. Like them he is a *man*, not an angel. Like them (though for dramatic purposes he seems to go through the Fire), he urges others to cross while himself debarred from the passionate plunge—but not like them through immunity from sin but because of a sin-shadowed destiny—Angelic in his 'recognition of the Light-Gift', yet himself un comforted by it (*Purg.* xxii—61, 73), he carries always his torch behind him, shedding radiance on the path of others—while himself walking in the dark.

It is an interesting coincidence that as in the Bible the Angel Hosts become common only in the later books, so they make their first appearance far on in the *Commedia*.

(*Purg.* xxx—13, 33, 82, 99-101, 145). The first group, and the only one in the *Purgatory*, consisting of one hundred Ministers and Messengers of Life Eternal responds—joyfully as a host of Resurrection Souls, to the voice of the author of the Song of Songs, invoking Wisdom—and assists at the culmination of Dante's destiny—the recognition of Beatrice and the disappearance of Virgil. 'Scatter lilies with full hands', they sing. Their flowers make a veil, like a wreath of mist, between Dante and Beatrice, as though to accentuate, though only in forms of beauty, the fact that he is not yet worthy of full vision—and perhaps, from the use of the word '*aspersione*' (*Purg.* xxxi—78-98) with some reference to the '*asperges me*' which follows—as if the scent of the flowers suggested the pungency of hyssop, and their whiteness the passionate purity of snow.

'Stern lessons', it is said, 'befall the strong.' 'Prune thou thy words, thy thoughts control', is the advice of an experienced religious teacher. Perhaps in the fact that just at this point Virgil disappears; that for the first time Dante finds his confident appeal, as to a mother, checked; that even in his great loss

he is denied sympathy; it is shown that a more condensed stage of aspiration has been reached and that he is no longer a child in purpose. It is Beatrice alone, however, who administers the rebuke. These angels are no longer ministering to man. They are now at their own work of praise and festival, and, having no responsibility, do not share Beatrice's duty of reproof, but may let their compassion have free play. They have a certain remoteness, but it produces tenderness, as sometimes in the case of age. They point the poet to God, even in his humiliation, and their considerateness in chanting only the hopeful verses of the psalm of appeal, and the harmony of their music with the eternal spheres, which, far from adding a formidable element, is like a sacrament of pity—melt the ice round his heart.

The leading characteristic of the group is an entire absence of self-assertion. Though desiring to shield Dante, they lend themselves as a medium for Beatrice's rebuke, of which a great part is addressed to them. At the fitting moment they leave off the scattering of their flowers to let her be seen. All the action reveals order, willingness to be subservient, and unfretted content.

The groups of angels are continued in the *Paradise*, but usually under symbolical forms.

(*Par.* xxviii—22, 39-94, 132). In Canto xxviii, God—a Point of Burning Light—is the Centre of nine Circles which represent the nine Orders of Angels. These Circles are not described as *coloured*, but it is interesting to remember in this connection the three Theological Virtues who, after Dante's immersion in Lethe, presented him before the eyes of Beatrice (*Purg.* xxxi—130, 138). They are said to represent the First Hierarchy (line 130), which, consisting of three Orders, is all vision, and thirst for vision—and they correspond with it in that their prayer for Dante is *Vision*. 'Unveil thyself . . . Turn thine eyes upon him', is the burden of their rhythmic and angelic song. And thus Vision, which Dante, following St Thomas Aquinas, makes the essence of Beatitude (*Par.* xxviii—110, 115), embraces within itself Love, so red as to be indistinguishable from flame—Hope, green as emerald, recalling the Rainbow round about the Throne, and Faith, white as newly-fallen snow (*Purg.* xxix—121, 129).

The second Hierarchy sings a perpetual Spring-Song. The word employed for 'singing' (*Svernare*) is used for the song of a bird

at the end of Winter—and the line might be translated ‘They sing a perpetual Hosannah of the Spring’—‘this threefold melody sounding in the three ranks of joy which form their threefold character’.

The Third Hierarchy is not so definitely described. But all, from the Seraphim swift in motion, and near God as the halo is near the moon, down to the angels who minister to man, all are bound in the closest bonds, drawn continually upwards, and continually drawing others after them.

In the two following groups the Angels make of communion with the Glorified Saints a part of their adoration (*Par.* xxx—61, 69). From a River of golden light they fly like sparks continually, to be set like rubies in the golden flowers which represent the Saints—till again they seek the River of Grace.

(*Par.* xxxi—I, 30). Like a cloud of Bees they rest on the snow-white Rose which typifies the Church Triumphant, the Bride of Christ—and then return to God—the Hive *where their work forms itself into sweetness*. Though likened to Bees, these angels are accurately described. Their faces are of living flame, their wings of gold, their garments whiter than any snow. Still ministering, they share with the Saints the Peace and Passion which they have gained in flying towards God. But they do not interpose between the Saints and the Beatific Vision. Unlike the flowers, scattered by angelic hands in the Earthly Paradise, their presence makes no impediment to the passage of the light. They form no veil between God and the Blessed, for nothing but unworthiness can be the real obstacle in these regions, and they see him face to face.

In the last group we have the true angelic form again, untouched by symbolism.

(*Par.* xxxi—118, 135). Round Mary, *the Oriflamme of Peace*, the Banner exalted for victory not by one, but by many angels, an innumerable company makes festival—each one distinct in splendour, in movement, and in gesture. They all reflect the beauty of Mary, but each has his own separate beauty—and it was, perhaps, from this vision of myriad individuality that Dante drew some of the individual angels of the Purgatory.

(*Par.* xxxii—85, 114). One form, detached from the soaring choir of exaltation, completes the number of the Angels of Dante. Not in flight, like those others who, as they fly between

God and the Blessed, rain upon Mary the fulness of heavenly joy, but with wings outspread, rapt and motionless in wonder and homage, the Angel of the Annunciation, leading the celestial song, makes a centre and focus for the multitude of the heavenly host. Gazing into the eyes of Mary, love has transformed him into flame. The act for which he was found worthy on earth has become an eternal act. The palm he carried to Mary is his palm almost as much as it is hers.

The two qualities named as his by St Bernard, and which he possesses above all angels, are ideal human qualities not often displayed together—glad confidence or fearlessness, mingled with harmonious grace. These are ungrudgingly attributed to him by angels and saints alike—‘We wish that he should have them’, says St Bernard with great simplicity.

And so, by the crowning Mystery of the Incarnation, Earth, no longer as a shadow, lies athwart the very heart of Heaven.

‘Meliked no other Heaven,’ says Julian of Norwich, speaking for all Christians—‘for I would liever have been in that pain till Doomsday than to come to Heaven otherwise than by Him.’ (*Revelations of Divine Love*).



ANGELS IN SCRIPTURE

ROSEMARY HEDDON

I AM Raphael, one of the seven angels, who present the prayers of the Saints before the throne and who go in and out of the courts of Heaven. . . . I cannot eat and drink and walk the earth with you; I am less than a breath. Now therefore, give God thanks; for I go unto Him that sent me.’ This quotation, taken from the play *Tobias and the Angel*, by James Bridie, and itself a paraphrase of the scriptural account of Raphael’s farewell to Tobias and his son, sums up the varying angelic activities which are described in the Old and New Testaments. They are shown to us in the courts of heaven, and for this we must depend on the attempted descriptions of visions, descriptions necessarily

failing in words, for their human authors were 'carried up into Paradise, and heard mysteries which man is not allowed to utter' (II Cor. xii, 4), yet, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, conjuring up a picture of power, splendour and light.

Perhaps the simplest and most straightforward is that of Isaias, who speaks of 'the Lord, sitting on a throne that towered high above me, the skirts of his robe filling the temple. Upon it stood the seraphim: the one had six wings and the other had six wings: with two they covered his face, with two they covered his feet, and with two they flew. And they cried one to another, and said: Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God of Hosts, all the earth is full of his glory.' (Isaias vi, 1-3.)

These mysterious six-winged beings, with their changeless worshipping cry, call up an awe-inspiring vision of majesty which is yet, to a certain degree, comprehensible. But turn to the writings of Ezechiel: the language is more poetic, the imagery on a grander scale, the mind whirls with the colour, the movement, the thunder and the light; yet almost baffling as this remains, despite the cold, geographical explanations of commentators, it leaves behind it a hint, a taste, a touch of the wonder and beauty of the angelic host, eternally glorifying God: '... this cloud had fire caught up in it, that fringed it with radiance. And . . . in the very heart of the fire, was a glow like amber, that enclosed four living figures. These were human in appearance, but each had four faces and two pairs of wings . . . faces and wings looked outward four ways. Wings of each were held touching wings of other; and when they moved they did not turn round, but each kept an onward course. As for the appearance of their faces, each had the face of a man, yet each of the four looked like a lion when seen from the right, like an ox when seen from the left, like an eagle when seen from above. . . . Each of them marched straight forward, following the movement of a divine impulse. . . . There was that, too, in the appearance of the living figures which put me in mind of flaming coals, or of torches; . . . going to and fro in the midst of the living figures, a glow as of fire, and from this glow lightning came out. So the living creatures came and went, vivid as lightning flashes. And as I watched the living figures, all at once wheels appeared close to them, one at each of the four sides, of strange colour and form. All four were alike,

the colour of aquamarine, and each looked like a wheel within a wheel. Moved they, it was ever one of the four ways the living figures looked; and they did not turn round in moving. As for their size, their height was terrible to look upon; and the whole frame of them, all round, was full of eyes. Onward the wheels moved, when the living figures moved onward, at their side; rose above the earth when the living figures rose above it. They too had a living impulse in them, . . . with the living figures, whose vital impulse they shared, the wheels too moved, and halted, and rose. Over the living figures a vault seemed to rise, like a sheet of dazzling crystal resting on their heads; under this vault each held two wings erect to meet his neighbour's. Each had two turned upward to shadow him, and two turned downwards to veil his body. When they moved, the sound of their wings reached me, loud as waters in flood or thunders from on high, incessant as the hum of a great throng or an armed camp; only when they came to rest did they lower their wings. Above this vault that rested on them, sapphire blue towered up into the form of a throne, nor did that throne seem to be empty; a shape there was above it, as of one enthroned, and all about him it was filled with amber-coloured flame. Upwards from his loins, downwards from his loins, an arch of light seemed to shine, like rainbow among the clouds on a day of storm; there was brightness all about him.' (Ezech. i, 4-28.) C. S. Lewis must have had this passage in mind when, in his novel *Perelandra*, he describes the forms assumed by the 'eldila': 'Darting pillars filled with eyes, lightning pulsations of flame, talons and beaks and billowy masses of what suggested snow, volleyed through cubes and heptagons into an infinite black void . . . and far off between the peaks on the other side of the little valley there came rolling wheels. There was nothing but that, . . . concentric wheels moving with a rather sickening slowness one inside the other. . . . And suddenly two human figures stood before him . . . they were burning hot like white-hot iron. The outline of their bodies seemed to be faintly, swiftly undulating as though the permanence of their shape, like that of waterfalls or flames, co-existed with a rushing movement of the matter it contained. . . . Whenever he looked straight at them, they appeared to be rushing towards him with enormous speed: whenever his eyes took in their surroundings,

he realized that they were stationary.'

In the Russian ballet exhibition shown in Edinburgh a year or two ago, there were some sketches for costumes of cherubim, and here again, the same influence could be seen. Formalized 'faces' looked both backward and forward from high arched wing structures, which, together with an arched halo, gave the effect of a triptych, whilst the wings themselves, patterned with a design of stylized eyes recalled: 'Eyes were everywhere, on body and neck and hand and wing and wheel too, for each cherub had its own wheel.' (Ezech. x, 12.)

And one last glimpse of the angels in heaven, this time seen through the eyes of St John, when he describes his vision of the struggle with Satan: 'Fierce war broke out in heaven, where Michael and his angels fought against the dragon . . . the great dragon, serpent of the primal age, was flung down to earth; he whom we call the devil, or Satan, the whole world's seducer, was flung down to earth, and his angels with him. Then I heard a voice crying aloud in heaven. The time has come; now we are saved and made strong, our God reigns, and power belongs to Christ, his anointed. . . .' (Apoc. xii, 7-10.)

But angels, as their name indicates, are messengers, and it is in this guise that they appear most frequently in scripture. Their missions would appear to fall into two distinct categories. In most of the appearances in Old Testament times they seem not only to bear a message from God, but also to be the agents of God's intervention. The first angels mentioned are those at the gate of the Garden of Eden: the Lord himself pronounced the edict of banishment, but he 'posted his cherubim before the garden of delight, with a sword of fire that turned this way and that, so that he could reach the tree of life no longer' (Gen. iii, 24).

Later there is the mysterious vision of Abraham at Mambre, where the three 'men' appear to him. We are told that he 'had a vision of the Lord', and throughout the account of this meeting, and the prophecy of Isaac's birth, one is referred to as 'the Lord', but in the account of the destruction of Sodom, which follows immediately after, the other two are definitely named 'angels': 'It was evening when the two angels reached Sodom. . . . Then follows the testing of the inhabitants, and the warning given to Lot, in which it is clear that they are to be the agents of destruc-

tion: '... take them out of the city, all that are thine. Our intent is to destroy this place; the ill repute of it goes from bad to worse, and the Lord knows of it, and has sent us to destroy them.' (Gen. xix, 13.)

It is the destroying angel who brings death to the first-born of the Egyptians, whilst sparing those of the Israelites, who shelter beneath the sign ordained by God: 'The Lord will pass on his way, smiting down the Egyptians, and when he sees the blood on the lintel and the jambs of a doorway he will pass by that house, and will not let the destroying angel enter your homes to do them injury.' (Exod. xii, 23.) Yet though these are harsh times, and a stiff-necked people, we also see the angel protecting and preserving. It is an angel who is sent to lead the Israelites through the desert to the Promised Land, but at the same time he is to be their leader in the paths of righteousness: 'And now I am sending my angel to go before thee and guard thee on thy way, and lead thee to the place I have made ready for thee. Give him good heed, and listen to his bidding; think not to treat him with neglect. He will not overlook thy faults, and in him dwells the power of my name.' (Exod. xxiii, 20, 21.)

When Sennacherib, king of Assyria, was besieging Ezechias in Jerusalem, the destroying angel of death struck down the enemy with pestilence, so that the dead numbered 'a hundred and eighty five thousand men in the Assyrian camp; when morning came, and men were astir, nothing was to be seen but the corpses of the dead'. (Is. xxxvii, 36.)

But not all the Old Testament appearances are the occasions of death and pestilence. In particular, there are two delightful stories, the first, of the angel who appeared to Balaam, when Balac had sent for him, in order that he should curse the advancing host of Israelites, and the second, already referred to, the story of Tobias, when the angel Raphael assumes human form, in order to reward Tobias for his faithfulness, save Sara from possession by the devil, and restore Tobias's sight. Humour may not be an attribute of angels, but one cannot deny it to the authors of these two stories.

In New Testament times, however, the angel appears on the scene more often simply as the bearer of a message from God, though, as in the case of Zachary, there are occasions where more action is called for. It is in these later appearances that the element

of holy fear is stressed. In earlier manifestations it goes almost without saying that the beholders or listeners are struck with fear. In most cases, the occasion itself is sufficiently fearful: the ladder which Jacob saw going up into heaven: 'a stairway for the angels of God to go up and come down. . . . When he awoke . . . Jacob said to himself, Why, this is the Lord's dwelling place, and I slept here unaware of it! And he shuddered; what a fearsome place is this! he said. . . .' (Gen. xxviii, 12, 16, 17.) Now, when the angelic messengers would seem to appear under kindlier circumstances, almost without exception their first words of greeting to men are, 'Fear not.' 'Zachary was bewildered at the sight, and overcome with fear; but the angel said, 'Zachary, do not be afraid. . . .' (Luke i, 13.) Even our Lady, greeted by the angel Gabriel as 'full of grace', receives the same reassurance, though we are not told that she feared, but rather that 'she was much perplexed at hearing him speak so, . . .' (Knox), or that she 'was troubled at his saying . . .' (Douay). In these appearances we are given no hint as to the visible form assumed, though later, at the Resurrection and the Ascension, the angels are described in greater detail: 'they . . . could not find the body of the Lord Jesus. They were still puzzling over this, when two men came and stood by them in shining garments.' (Luke xxiv, 3, 4.) But something in their aspect still fills the beholders with awe. We are told that they 'bowed their faces to the earth in fear', while Tobias and his son, familiar, though they have been with the angel Raphael, under the guise of their good friend Azarias, are so filled with awe when he reveals himself, that 'they were both mazed with terror, and fell down trembling, face to earth . . . for three hours together, face to earth, they gave thanks to God.' (Tob. xii, 16, 22.) And this last sentence gives the key, perhaps, to this fear. It is not as messengers, but as God's messengers that they are feared; the worship and reverence they receive only for him: 'All this, I, John, heard and saw, till, hearing and seeing it, I fell down as if to worship at the feet of the angel who revealed it to me. But he said, Never that; I am only a fellow servant of thine, and of thy brother prophets, and of all who hold fast the words which this book contains. Keep thy worship for God.' (John xxii, 8, 9.) Bearing in mind, then, that higher than man though they be, we are all together created to give glory to God, we may truly join

in saying, 'The angels praise thy majesty, the dominations adore it, and the powers are in awe; the heavens and the virtues of heaven and the blessed seraphim celebrate it with united joy. With these we pray thee join our voices while we say with lowly praise: Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts, heaven and earth are full of thy glory.'



TOO GOOD TO BE USED

THOMAS GILBY, O.P.

WHEN at length Job's comforters had done their reasonable best to justify God's ways with man according to their own theological preconceptions, *the Lord answered him out of the whirlwind, and said, Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? When the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy.*¹ Let a scholastic psychologist bear in mind that closure to the debate when he sets out to outline how we should use our faculties in our life with God.²

Using is what we do with utilities, and these as such are expendable objects which though not valuable in themselves do serve a higher purpose. Hence it is not the same as cherishing, which is what we do with things dear in themselves, or as enjoying, which is what we do with things that give us pleasure. Three kinds of good, *bonum utile*, *bonum honestum*, and *bonum delectabile*—that is the classical division, and our environment is shot through with it in many and varying forms.³

I

Note, St Thomas warns us, the division is rather of contrasted notions than of different things.⁴ For what is useful from one aspect can be worthy and delightful from another, thus a police-

¹ Job xxxviii, 1, 2, 7.

² A continuation of 'Having our Faculties', THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT, xi, pp. 499-510, May, 1957.

³ Ia. v, 6, c. ad 3.

⁴ Ibid. ad 2.

man with respect to a householder and to his own wife. Similarly, what is valuable in itself may also be useful, thus a friend in need proves that *amicitia honesta et delectabilis* is also *amicitia utilis*.⁵ So also, what is fun may also be functional, otherwise the human race might die out for lack of incentive to propagate itself.⁶ It would go without saying, but for the streak of puritanism which infects most of us, that the worthy and the cheering may go together. That we enjoy our food, says St Thomas, is a sign that we need it.⁷ And, in the words of Marie Lloyd, a little bit of what you fancy does you good.

Nor should it be a little bit, for delight is a pretty good indication of whether you are on to a good thing or not.⁸ Most of us would profit from a great deal more of it. When speaking of boredom, St Thomas echoed St Gregory about the troubles that follow from absence of joy—despair, meanness, sluggishness, rancour, spite and wasteful brooding.⁹ Hedonism is worse in theory than in practice, since, as both Aristotle and Plato noticed, it puts the cart before the horse. A thing is not good because it gives us pleasure; it gives us pleasure because it is good.¹⁰ Or rather, a thing which gives us pleasure may only look good, *bonum apparens*; it is really good for us, *bonum verum*, only when it fits into our entire scheme of happiness.¹¹ What matters is that we should find what is truly sound, *bonum honestum*, through the appropriate means, *bonum utile*, and that is decided by our knowledge. Whereas what is pleasurable, *bonum delectabile*, is settled by our desire, which may or may not match what our reason tells us is right. If not then we shall be led astray.¹²

Hence our moral duty in life is to sort out means and ends, that is, to appreciate what is honourable and serviceable and to enjoy only those things we should enjoy. I say *only*, which sounds grudging: I should add that we should not fail to enjoy those at least. For we are placed in a world where things fair in themselves

5 See 2a-2ae. xxiii, 5; cvi, 5; cxiv, 1, *ad* 1. VIII *Ethics*, lect. 3, 13; *de duobus praeceptis Caritatis*, 5.

6 1a. xcvi, 2, *ad* 3; 1a-2ae. xxxi, 6; III *Contra Gentes*, 26.

7 VII *Ethics*, lect. 14.

8 1a-2ae. xxxi, 2; xxxiv, 1, 2, 4.

9 2a-2ae. xxxv, 4.

10 1a-2ae. ii, 6.

11 2a-2ae. xxiii, 7; xlv, 1, *ad* 1.

12 1a-2ae. xxxiv, 2, *ad* 1.

are not worthless. *And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good.*¹³ Such is the refrain of the first chapter of the Bible.

Indeed the first obstacle to those who seek God is not the problem of evil but the problem of good. 'Too late', cried St Augustine, 'too late am I come to love thee, O thou Beauty, so ancient and still so new; too late am I come to love thee. And behold, thou wert with me, and I without; and there made I search for thee, and mistakenly cast myself upon the things of thy creation, which yet thou hadst made fair. Thou wert with me indeed, but I remained not with thee. These things withheld me from thee, which yet, if they had not their being in thee, would not be at all.'¹⁴

That is the pathos and tragedy of human sin: not that we would directly turn away from God, but that we are prepared to treat creatures as though they were our ultimate end, and to let that be our settled disposition.¹⁵ Nevertheless, because they are not ultimate ends it does not follow that they are not ends at all but merely means; because they fall short of complete worth it does not follow that they have no goodness within themselves; because we still look for more it does not follow that they are only utilities.¹⁶ To count them cheap, says St Thomas, is to slight divine power.¹⁷

They are true goods unless they lead us away from God. The spiritual writers may teach us to be frugal about them, but stinginess is another matter. There is something wrong with our spiritual digestion if they turn to dust and ashes in our mouth. All very well to feel disillusioned after a disappointment, but a settled misanthropy is no part of Christian teaching. So also there is something phoney about religious advice which bids us treat creatures merely as penitential occasions, or at most as objects for dutiful attention. Certainly there is a Christian sadness with the world, and St Thomas takes the *lacrimae rerum* into that Gift of the Spirit called Knowledge.¹⁸ This is not to say that we should

¹³ Gen. i, 31.

¹⁴ *Confessions*, x, 27.

¹⁵ 1a. xix, 9; 1a-2ae. lxxii, 1, 5; lxxv, 1; lxxxvii, 4; 3a. lxxxvi, 4, 5.

¹⁶ 1a. vi, 4; 2a-2ae. xxiii, 7; xlv, 1, *ad* 1. *I Sentences*, VIII, i, 2, *ad* 2.

¹⁷ III *Contra Gentes*, 69.

¹⁸ 2a-2ae. ix, 4.

school ourselves to think of the world as a spa, and of a spa merely as a place where you drink nauseating waters. *Medicina amara*—it is his example of a pure utility.¹⁹

Yet how irrepressible human nature is, thank God. As Epsom Salts make admirable sparkling snow on the brown-paper rocks of the Christmas crib, so human beings can manage to esteem and enjoy the things they have to make do with. They are wise. It is as St Thomas noted: the distinction between the valuable and the useful is rather of different relative aspects than of things in themselves. When it was said—I think by St Augustine but I cannot find where—that we go wrong when we enjoy the useful and use the enjoyable, the words are to be taken precisely and as implying, not that we should not take pleasure in putting a high polish on the floor, but that we should not be obsessed by it. That applies to all things in this life: we can have too much creature, but never enough God.²⁰

II

We have reached our point, and a lesson we have to learn. It is this. God is too excellently good and delightful to be used. He is to be loved for his own sake, and enjoyed. *Deo nullus recte utitur, sed fruitur*, said St Augustine.²¹ He is better than a substitute object that serves when we are beaten by life. He is more than the First Cause and Integrator of our universe. He is beyond the solution of our problems. He is himself. He is not for us. We are for him.

But when we have said that we pause. For even in affirming his transcendence we are almost as tangled in our rational concepts as when we introduce him into our thoughts and desires in order to straighten them out. 'If thou hadst been able to comprehend him as thou thinkest, by so thinking thou hast deceived thyself, This then is not God, if thou hast comprehended it: but if this be God, thou hast not comprehended it'.²² How full of surprises he is, how gently snubbed we are even when we would proclaim his majesty, how unjealous a lover he is who does not scorn

19 1a. v, 6, *ad* 2.

20 1a-2ae. lxiv, 4; 2a-2ae. xxiv, 7.

21 LXXXIII Quaest. 30; quoted 1a-2ae. xvi, 3 *sed contra*.

22 St Augustine, *Sermones* CCCXCVI, lii, 6.

being a comfort when all else has failed, how giving of himself for our sake with not too many questions asked. He made us for his honour, but he has nothing to gain; he does not need to see his own reflection, and his honour is our happiness. What is the theological virtue of hope but a kind of supernatural concupiscence whereby we want what his almighty power will do for us?²³

Nevertheless, his mercy is not our right. He is not under contract, and his grace is not our due. *Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him?*²⁴ I wonder if that be a rare effrontery? Presumption lies close to hope, and tempting God lies close to religion; both are sins which share the common element of intruding our little wants into the plans of Providence.²⁵ For our consolation St Thomas judges that there are worse sins: presumption is not so bad as despair, for expecting too much from God is not so bad as expecting too little since it is more like him to spare than to punish; and the irreverence of trying to find out what his intentions are going to be is less than the superstition of getting them all wrong.²⁶

We profess that we are at God's service. Do we feel that he is at ours, expect him to serve our purposes, want to tell him what he should do? Put like that you will reply, Who would be so ridiculous? Yes, who? Most of us are good soil for the vices—not for all, because we can extract a melancholy satisfaction from the truth that the vices are not interconnected like the virtues and that some of them cancel one another out.²⁷ We are probably deceiving ourself when we think of any particular sin as off our map. How often people seem to possess those very faults they most reprobate in others. How often articulate humility is wide of the mark. What, me?—we have all heard the tone of astonishment.

Anyhow, let us not be too choosy about our weaknesses but be prepared to ask ourselves whether we do not fall into the habit of using God. We do it when we are morbidly fearful and scrupu-

23 2a-2ae. xvii, 2; 6, ad 3.

24 Job, xl, 2.

25 2a-2ae. xxi, 1; xcvi, 2.

26 2a-2ae. xxi, 2; xcvi, 4.

27 1a-2ae. lxxii, 1.

lous, and demand the sort of reassurance about our spiritual security not yet accorded by Divine Providence. *Wherefore, my beloved, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*²⁸ We do it also when we are quite the reverse and bouncing. The assumption that God is on our side pervasively and subtly runs through all the sins of spiritual pride, not an uncommon sin when it is not read in an exalted sense.²⁹

But who is like to God? Lovable and terrible, declares St Augustine, serene and severe, beautiful and harsh. He is the Holy, Holy, Holy of the trisagion; he is set in his awful purity apart from the mixture of our wants; he is the *mysterium tremendum*. *There is none like thee, O Lord: thou art great, and great is thy name in might. Who shall not fear thee?*³⁰ If his intense goodness does not shrivel our petty impurity, at least can we be more than his slaves with no will but his.³¹ How can we think to use him? Listen to this formidable irony: *Gird up thy loins now like a man. I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous? Hast thou an arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a voice like him? Deck thyself now with majesty and excellence, and array thyself with glory and beauty. Cast abroad the rage of thy wrath, and behold every one that is proud and abase him. Look on every one that is proud and bring him low; and tread down the wicked in their place. Hide them in the dust together; and bind their faces in secret. Then will I also confess unto thee that thine own right hand can save thee.*³²

And yet, and yet . . . *not servants but friends*, he said.³³ When we are commanded to love God for his own sake, it is to do more than want him, more than to admire him; it is to share with him and enjoy him.³⁴ Charity is no aspiration, it is not worship; it is friendship. It goes past what suits our convenience, it goes past awe; it is rejoicing with God just because he is God. Let us not be worried that we are given an impossible command

28 Phil. ii, 12-13.

29 2a-2ac. clxii, 2, 4, 6.

30 Jer. x, 6-7.

31 2a-2ac. xliv, 4, ad 2.

32 Job, xl, 6-14.

33 John, xv, 15.

34 2a-2ac. xxiii, 1.

to keep unless we have reached such heroic sanctity that we are constantly aware of divine goodness suffusing our every interest. We make a good beginning in this present life if our mind tells us that he alone is good of himself and if our will is prepared never to act against him.³⁵ Let our sensations and emotions tag along as best they may: we will be grateful if they are granted devotion, loyal if it be withheld.

See how we have come to the same conclusion that God is not to be used. But this time, not by insisting on the awe he should inspire, but by meditating on what lies at the heart of friendship. Even in human relationships we know that happy stage when no advantage is sought and there is no thought of approbation and all is unquestioning and actively still in joy. And who can compare with God and who is more accessible?



ST AUGUSTINE'S SERMON ON PSALM XXXIII: I

Translated by EDMUND HILL, O.P.

After recapitulating his previous day's sermon on the title of the psalm, he proceeds:

SO much for the psalm's title. Now let us listen to the actual words of him who is affecting and drumming at the city gate. 'I shall bless the Lord at all times, his praise shall be always in my mouth.' Christ says it, let the Christian say it too, because the Christian is part of Christ's body. When will you bless the Lord? When he makes things easy for you? When you enjoy worldly wealth, and plenty of corn, oil, wine, gold, silver, slaves, cattle, and the best of health besides; when your crops and herds flourish, and nothing dies or dwindles out of time, when your house is filled to overflowing with prosperity, is that when you are going to bless the Lord? No, no, but at all times. Even then, therefore, when bad times come, and you get a taste of the whip of the Lord our God, when all these things are turned upside

³⁵ 2a-2ae. xliv, I, ad 3.

down and taken away, and your crops and herds begin to fail and die off. These things do happen after all, and bring poverty and want, pain and toil and testing times in their wake. But you there have just been singing, 'I will bless the Lord at all times, and his praise shall be always in my mouth'; so bless him when he gives you these good things, and bless him too when he takes them away. Because it is he who gives and he who takes away; but he never takes himself away from those who bless him.

But then who does bless the Lord at all times except the humble of heart? We have been taught this humility by our Lord himself in his body and blood; when he sets his body and blood before us, it is his humility he is setting before us, as in that passage from the story of David's pretence of madness which I forgot to mention just now, 'and spittle was running down over his beard'. You heard about that spittle running down the beard when St Paul was read a moment ago.—What spittle? We never heard him mention spittle.—It has just been read this minute; 'The Jews look for signs, and the Greeks want wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified (Christ drumming on the city gates), to the Jews a scandal, a put-off, to the Greeks foolishness; but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God; because God's folly is wiser than men, and God's weakness is stronger than men.'¹ Spittle stands for foolishness and weakness. But if God's folly is wiser than men and his weakness stronger than men, don't be disgusted with them as with spittle, but notice that they are running down the beard. The beard stands for power and strength. So he covered up his strength in the body of his weakness. His weakness showed up outwardly like the spittle; but inside there was his divine strength, covered up like the beard. This is the way then he sets humility before us. Be humble if you want to bless God at all times. Job didn't only bless God when he was doing well with all the riches we read about his enjoying, the herds and the servants, the house and the children and everything. They were all taken away at a stroke, and yet he carried out what is written in this psalm, and said:² 'The Lord has given, the Lord has taken away; it has happened as it pleased the Lord;

1 1 Cor. i, 22.

2 Job i, 21.

may the Lord's name be blessed'. There's an example for you of someone blessing the Lord at all times.

Now why, once more, does a man bless the Lord at all times? Because he is humble. And what does being humble mean? Not wanting to be praised in oneself. The man who wants to be praised in himself is proud. You don't want to be proud, do you? To become humble, then, say what the psalm goes on to say: 'My soul shall be praised in the Lord; let the gentle hear and be glad'. So those who don't want to be praised in the Lord are not gentle, but ferocious, rough, stuck-up, proud. The Lord wants to have gentle, tame animals. You be the Lord's animal, that is, be gentle. Then he will sit on you and control you, and you need not be afraid of stumbling and coming a cropper. Certainly you are weak and wobbly, but remember who is riding you. You are only the foal of an ass, a baby donkey, but you are carrying Christ. You remember how he came into the city riding on an ass's foal, and it was a gentle animal. Was the donkey cheered, do you think, was the donkey greeted with 'Hosanna, son of David, blessed who comes in the name of the Lord?'³ The donkey was only carrying him, it was the rider who was being praised by those who went in front and followed behind. Perhaps the donkey was saying: 'My soul shall be praised in the Lord, let the gentle hear and be glad'. No, of course, brothers, I know very well the donkey never said that; but the people the donkey stands for should say it, if it wants to carry its Lord. Perhaps the people is annoyed at being compared to the donkey the Lord sat on; and some proud and stuck-up people will say to me: 'Look here, he has called us donkeys'. I hope you will be the Lord's donkey if you feel like that, and don't become instead the horse and mule who have no understanding. You know that psalm, don't you, which says: 'Don't be like the horse and mule which have no understanding'.⁴ Horses and mules, you see, stiffen their necks sometimes, and buck off their riders, they are so wild. Then they are tamed and broken in with bits and bridles and whips, until they learn to be submissive and carry their masters. You be gentle, then, and carry your Lord before you get your mouth all bruised with the bit; don't try and be praised in yourself; let your

³ Matt. xxi, 9.

⁴ Psalm xxxi, 9.

rider get the praise, and you be content to say: 'My soul shall be praised in the Lord, let the gentle hear and be glad'. When those who are not gentle hear they are not glad but annoyed; and they are the ones who say indignantly I have called them donkeys. Those who are gentle must not mind hearing that and being what they hear.

It goes on: 'Magnify the Lord with me'. Who is it exhorting us to magnify the Lord with him? Anyone who belongs to the body of Christ, brothers, ought to make an effort to get others to magnify the Lord with him. Because this man, whoever he is, loves the Lord, and he loves him too in such a way that he isn't jealous of his fellow lover. Anyone who loves in a carnal fleshly fashion cannot help his love being wretchedly jealous. For example, if a man has the chance of seeing the woman he has long had this wretched sort of love for naked, do you suppose he wants anyone else to come and see her too? If another man did, he couldn't help being furiously jealous. And indeed the only way to safeguard chastity is for no one to see her so except the man who has the right to—or not even him. But it isn't like that with the Wisdom of God. We shall see her face to face, and we shall all see her and there will be no jealousy. She shows herself to all, she gives herself to all chaste and unimpaired. They are changed into her, she is not changed into them. She is truth, she is God. You never heard, did you, brothers, of our God being changed? Towering above all things, is truth, is the Word of God,⁵ the Wisdom of God, through whom all things were made. She has her lovers; and what does a lover of hers say? 'Magnify the Lord with me.' 'I don't want to magnify him alone, I don't want to love him and take him in my arms all by myself. Don't imagine that if I put my arms round, there won't be room for anyone else to get a hand in. There is so much room, such ample space in this Wisdom, that all souls can embrace and enjoy her together.' And I will go further, brothers, and say that people who love God in such a way that they are jealous of others, ought to be downright ashamed of themselves. Look at the way dissolute men, when they are crazy about some charioteer or bull-fighter, want the whole population to be crazy about them too. A man will press you and cajole you to share his craze for some comedian,

or for this or that low entertainment. He clamours in the street to get others to share his passion for some low entertainment, and is the Christian not going to clamour in the Church to get others to share his passion for God's truth? Stir up the love in you then, brothers, start yelling and clamouring at each other and saying: 'Magnify the Lord with me'. Let this ardour, this enthusiasm infect you. Why do you think these things are recited and explained to you? If you love God, drag everyone you know along to love him, too—everyone in your families. If you love the body of Christ, which is the unity of the Church, drag them along to enjoy it, too, and say: 'Come and magnify the Lord with me'.

'And let us exalt his name in the selfsame.' 'In the self-same' means all together. So drag along everyone you can, urging, pressing, pleading, pulling, arguing, and pushing, but gently and with good humour. Whirl them off their feet into love, so that if they magnify the Lord, they will magnify him all together. The Donatists of course imagine that they are magnifying the Lord. But in what way has the rest of the world offended them? Let us say to them, brothers, 'Magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name all together. Why do you want to magnify the Lord separately? There is one God; why do you want to provide him with two peoples? Why do you want to scatter the body of Christ?' When he was hanging on the cross, you remember how his executioners came and found that he was dead, and so they did not break his legs. But they broke the legs of the two thieves who were still alive on their crosses, so that the shock would kill them sooner and put them out of their agony—as used to be the custom with criminals who were being crucified. So the executioner comes and finds our Lord has quietly breathed his last already—because, as he said himself, 'I have power to lay down my life'.⁶ And who did he lay down his life for? For his whole people, his whole body. The executioners came and did not break Christ's legs; Donatus came and broke up Christ's Church. Christ's body stays whole and unbroken on the cross among his executioners, while Christ's Church is not left whole and unbroken among Christians. Let us clamour then, brothers, with all the earnestness we can muster, and say: 'Magnify the Lord with me, and let us

⁶ John x, 18.

exalt his name all together'. It is the Church that is clamouring to them, the Church's voice clamouring to those who have cut themselves off from her. And how were they broken off? By pride. But Christ teaches humility when he sets his body and blood before us. And that is what this psalm is all about, as I have told you already; it is setting Christ's body and blood before us, presenting us with his humility, which he did not disdain to clothe himself in for our sakes.

'I looked for the Lord and he heard me out.' Where did he hear me out? Inside. Where does he do his granting of requests? Inside. That is the place to pray and to be heard out, and to be made happy. You have been praying, you have been heard and made happy; and the man standing next to you does not know a thing about it. It has all happened in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will pay you back, just as our Lord says in the gospel: 'Go into your room and shut the door and pray in secret'.⁷ Going into your room involves going into your mind. Lucky are the ones who enjoy going into their own minds, and do not find anything wrong there. Listen carefully, please, all of you. Just as men who have nagging wives don't want to go home, just as they go out into the street with relief; then the time comes for them to go home, and their spirits droop because they are going back to dreariness, to grumbling, to scolding, to ructions; it is a badly managed household where there is no peace between husband and wife, and it is better for the poor man to wander round outside. Well, then, if it's wretched for men who cannot return to their own four walls without being afraid of getting turned upside down in a family row, how much more wretched must it be for people who don't want to go back into their own consciences for fear of being turned upside down by a squabbling pack of sins! So then, to be able to go back willingly into your own mind, clean it up. Happy are the clean of heart, for they shall see God.⁸ Take away the dirt of your lusts, remove the shabbiness of meanness and greed, get rid of the scabbiness of superstition, out with your sacrileges, your bad thoughts, your hatreds. Get rid of all this, and you can go into your mind and enjoy it. When you begin to enjoy yourself there, the cleanliness

⁷ Matt. vi, 6.

⁸ Matt. v, 8.

of your mind will delight you and start you praying. Just as if you come to some quiet and peaceful place, all clean and fresh, and you say, 'Let's pray here'; the suitability of the place pleases you, and you fancy God will listen to you there. Well, if you get such satisfaction out of finding a visible place all spick and span, why are you not disgusted at finding your own mind filthy and untidy? Go in and clean it up, and then lift up your eyes to God and he will listen to you. 'I looked for the Lord and he heard me out, he pulled me out of all my troubles.' You see, even when you have been given light and have put your conscience in order, you are still left with troubles because there is still plenty of weakness in you, until death is swallowed up in victory, and this mortality has put on immortality.⁹ You cannot avoid getting a flick of the whip in this world, you cannot avoid undergoing temptations and bad suggestions. God will clean it all up at the end and pull you out of every trouble; look for him. 'I looked for the Lord and he heard me out.' So those who are not heard out do not look for the Lord. Notice, please, exactly what he says. It is not 'I looked for money from the Lord and he heard me out, I looked for a ripe old age from the Lord, I looked for this thing or that from the Lord and he heard me out.' It is one thing to look for some advantage from the Lord, it is quite another to look for the Lord himself. I looked for the Lord, he says, and he heard me. But when *you* pray and say, 'Please kill my enemy for me', you are not looking for the Lord at all; you are making yourself your enemy's judge, and making God your hangman. How do you know he isn't a better man than you are, this man whose blood you are after? He probably is, by the very fact indeed that he isn't out for yours. Don't look then for anything extra from the Lord, look for the Lord himself and he will hear you out, and while you are still speaking he will say: 'Look, here I am'.¹⁰ 'Here I am myself; what do you want, what are you hoping to get from me? Whatever I give you, it is less worth having than I am. Take *me*, enjoy *me*, embrace *me*. You cannot yet put your arms all round me. But only touch me by faith and you will stick to me'—this is what God says to you, remember—'and I will relieve you of all your other burdens, so that you can

⁹ I Cor xv, 54.

¹⁰ Isaiah lviii, 9.

stick to me completely when I have turned this mortality of yours into immortality; so that you can be the equal of my angels and always see my face, and rejoice, and your joy no one will take away from you.'¹¹ Because you have looked for the Lord, and he has heard you out, and pulled you out of all your troubles.

Now he goes on to say, this lover who does not want his love all to himself, but is pressing us to share it with him, 'Approach him and be enlightened'. He is speaking from his own experience. He is a spiritual man in the body of Christ, or he is even our Lord Jesus Christ himself according to the flesh, the head urging on the rest of the body and saying: 'Approach him and be enlightened'. But no, it is better to take it after all as some spiritual Christian inviting the rest of us to approach our Lord. But let us be sure to approach him and be enlightened, not like the Jews who approached him and were darkened. They approached him to crucify him; we should approach him to receive his body and blood. They were all in the dark about the one they crucified; we by eating and drinking the one they crucified are enlightened, 'Approach him and be enlightened', it is said to the Gentiles. When Christ was crucified he was among the Jews, who saw it happen with savage satisfaction; the Gentiles were absent from the scene. That's how those who were in the dark approached him, and those who did not see him were enlightened. And how do the Gentiles approach? They follow along by faith, they puff and pant out of eagerness, they run by charity. Charity is your feet. See that you have two feet; don't be a peg-leg. Charity's two feet are the two commandments of love, to love God and our neighbour. Run to God, approach him on those two feet. Besides urging you on, he has poured out his light on you so that you can follow him in divine splendour. 'Approach him and be enlightened, and your countenance will not be put to shame.' It is only the proud man whose countenance is put to shame. Why? Because he always wants to be on top, and when he is affronted or disgraced, or suffers a setback or a loss in his affairs, he feels ashamed. But don't you be afraid; approach him and you will not be ashamed. Whatever your enemy has done to you, however much he seems in men's eyes to have got the better of you, with

God it is you who have got the better of him. 'I caught him, I tied him up, I finished him off.' Men who can talk like that fancy themselves to be top dogs. The Jews thought they were on top when they knocked our Lord about, when they spat in his face, and beat him on the head with a cane, when they crowned him with thorns and dressed him in clothes of ridicule. And he, apparently, was the under-dog, falling down at the doors of the gate. But he was not ashamed, because he was the true light which enlightens every man who comes into this world.¹² Just as the light then cannot be put to confusion, so he does not let anyone he has enlightened be put to confusion. Approach him then and be enlightened, and your countenance will not be put to shame.

But how, someone will say, how can I approach him loaded with so much evil, so many sins clamouring in my conscience? How could I dare approach God?—How? If you humble yourself by repenting.—But I am ashamed to repent.—But approach him and your countenance will not be ashamed. Don't you see that if fear of being put to shame holds you back from repenting, while repenting makes you approach God, you are in fact carrying your punishment on your countenance, because the reason your countenance is put to shame is that it has not approached him; and the reason it hasn't approached him is that it does not want to repent. As the psalmist goes on to point out, 'This poor man clamoured and the Lord heard him out'. He is teaching you how to get yourself listened to. The reason that you are not listened to is that you are rich. Clamour in poverty and the Lord listens.—And how am I to clamour in poverty?—By not trusting to your own resources, even if you have any; by understanding how needy you are as long as you haven't got him who makes you rich. And how did the Lord hear him? 'He brought him safe out of all his troubles.' And how does he do that? 'The angel of the Lord will put in round those who fear him, and pull them out.' That's what is written, but some faulty copies have 'The Lord will put in an angel round those who fear him', but that is wrong. Who is being called the angel of the Lord? Our Lord Jesus Christ himself, who is called angel of great counsel, that is messenger of great counsel, in a prophecy of

¹² John i, 9.

Isaias.¹³ This is the angel, the messenger of great counsel, who will put in round those who fear him and pull them out. So don't be afraid of being overlooked. Wherever you are, fearing the Lord, this angel knows about you, and will put in round you and pull you out.

And now he wants to speak openly about that mysterious, that sacramental riddle, in which he was being carried in his own hands. 'Taste and see that the Lord is lovely.' The psalm is opening itself out, isn't it, and showing what that steady craziness means, that sane madness, that sober drunkenness which that other David indulged in when he was telling them of a sign, a pattern of something or other, and when they said to him in the character of king Achis: 'How can it be?'; the time our Lord was saying: 'Unless a man eats my flesh and drinks my blood he will not have life in himself'.¹⁴ And they who were dominated by king Achis, that is by error and ignorance, what did they say? 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?' If you don't know how, taste and see that the Lord is lovely. And if you still don't understand, you are king Achis, and David will change his features and leave you, and send you away and go off.

To be concluded

¹³ Isaias ix, 6.

¹⁴ John vi, 53.



COMMENT

I. THE MASS AS A DRAMA

AS A LAYMAN who is worried about the place of the Church in the life of the laity I write this open letter to all priests, begging their understanding of my seeming impertinence and requesting their blessing for myself and my family. Today, more than ever, it is necessary that we laymen attend Mass frequently. Yet few of us do. What is the reason? Is it because the Mass is said in Latin, as some have stated? Is it

really necessary that we use English in our Mass? Will this alone suffice to bring the layman to daily Mass?

I suggest an experiment: find any average layman and suggest to him that he is, in his imagination, present in Jerusalem on that fateful Friday; that a sacrifice is about to be consummated; that this sacrifice has more significance for him and the whole human race than can be understood this side of eternity. Then ask him if he would choose to be absent. Yet it is this same sacrifice that is offered each day, and he does choose to be absent. Why? Perhaps he does not see the Mass as a sacrifice.

Of course, he has been told all about the Mass as a sacrifice, of its importance to him, of its importance to his fellow members of the Mystical Body, of its one-ness with Calvary, of much more. All this he knows. But all this he does not see.

The Mass, to be really seen as *the* sacrifice, must be a drama as well. May I cite a few particulars?

Prior to the distribution of Holy Communion, the priest says '*Ecce Agnus Dei*'. I can imagine how John the Baptist spoke those words. I know how some priests mumble them. The contrast is distressing. Some even half-hide the Lamb of God with their body as they turn from the tabernacle toward the people. How can we behold? That '*ECCE!*' should ring. The hands holding the Sacred Species and the Ciborium should be outstretched, as a soldier presenting arms—for a full ten seconds—before '*Ecce! Agnus Dei!*' is voiced. Then Latin, English, or gibberish, we would all understand that we were to look, to reflect, to adore. The priest says '*ecce*' but his actions betray his words. If the beholding is so unimportant, then is it wrong to conclude that communicating might be of little value? We are led by our shepherds. Lead us, then!

Consider the Amen at the end of the Canon, after the so-called minor elevation. It is true that custom prevents the congregation from reciting this response. But it is still the most important single word, for the layman, in the whole Mass. I have served some priests who go from '*Per omnia saecula saeculorum*' to '*Oremus. Praeceptis . . .*' as though it were one word. How can I, in such circumstances, realize that the movement when I am to make my own act of sacrifice is at hand, nay past? If the language is changed to English and the same procedure followed, what

good will it do? Might it not be well, while we still use the Latin, to make a significant pause here? Could we train our representatives at the altar, the servers, to say this 'Amen' forthrightly, with a sense of having agreed to give all to the Father, by, with, and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Ghost? And could the priest wait, please, until they have said 'Amen' before continuing? Why all the rush?

The rubrics of the Mass provide many opportunities (more than my knowledge can suggest) for the priest to show by his bodily actions and his manner of speaking that we are indeed present at a sacrifice, that it is the same sacrifice offered on Calvary, that it is efficacious for us to be here. Then we can begin, here and now, to know why we should attend Mass frequently.

Some of us have been moved by grace to attend daily Mass, often (I am not included here) with great hardship, in inclement weather, against the antagonism of near relatives, and so on. But apparently there are many many others who have not yet received this grace. I suggest, humbly and respectfully, that a little attention to the drama of the Mass will move yet more of us to come to Mass. We do need to understand why the Mass is so important; I plead for instruction of the faithful during the Mass by means of the due performance of its dramatic words and acts. If we really understood, who can tell the results?

J. A. YOUNG.

Dallas, Pa., U.S.A.

2. EVENING MASS IN A VERMONT VILLAGE

OURS IS A small mission parish in Vermont. This is the first year that we have had evening Mass once a week during Lent. Tonight the members of our church family will be gathering for the third evening. We will come to offer ourselves with thanksgiving to our Heavenly Father in union with his Son, our Lord.

There will be mud and slush on the cars that are driven in from outlying areas 'off the black top'. In the congregation there will be men who have spent the day working in mines, bakeries, factories, offices. A number will have observed the necessary fast of three hours previous to Mass so that they may receive

Communion. With them at the altar rail will be women who have worked in offices and mothers whose family cares started very early in the day. Children will be kneeling beside them. For all these, the words of the postcommunion prayer will have special meaning:

‘May the Sacrament of Thy Body and Blood, O Lord Jesus Christ, which we have received, sanctify our minds and hearts, that we may deserve to become partakers of the Divine Nature’.

Our congregation is not large, sixty last Thursday evening, and we are certainly not a sophisticated group. Because we are a small assembly in God’s Household, there is an intimacy in our worshipping together that visitors sometimes speak of wistfully. We can hear every word that our priest says. At the Sunday Mass and the two week-day Masses we make all the responses customarily made by altar boys, including the *Judica* and *Confiteor*, and they are made, I believe, intelligently. We say the *Kyrie*, *Gloria*, *Credo*, *Sanctus*, and *Agnus Dei*. We also pray the *Pater Noster*, and we say the *Domine non sum dignus*. The prayers and lesson are read in English by men of our parish. After reading the Gospel in Latin our priest reads it to us in English. On week-days when there are only a few of us, we place our own hosts on the paten held by the altar boy at the railing.

I am a convert, very grateful to have had this experience of the liturgy. The Missal has been indispensable, but for use at home only. The parts of the Mass in which we participate are soon learned by heart. The original instruction was given by a layman who says that the people, and especially the children, picked it up quickly. In the six years since I have been in the parish there has been no instruction. Newcomers have picked it up from the original group. The chief contribution of our priest is that he offers Mass slowly, audibly and reverently.

Summer visitors from Europe and from our own country speak with enthusiasm of the spirit of the Mass in our chapel. Parishoners from neighbouring towns, especially young married couples and families with children, join us frequently.

I appreciate Father Pepler’s remarks about liturgy’s being an action rather than words. However, in the next parish, where I go to Mass on weekdays when there is none here, this is what I

find: communion before Mass; then the few people present finger their Rosaries in prayer throughout the Mass. How can they have any idea of the Mass as a sacrifice in which they should be participating before they receive the Living Bread?

As for 'mystery', I sympathize with Father Pepler's thought. Because silent, wordless prayer was the medium most 'natural' to me before coming into the Church, I could be a person who preferred a silent congregation. But I fear that non-vocal participation often means that in many a mind and heart there is vacuity, or at least much vagueness. The Mass means so much to me that I yearn for every person to experience it in so far as he is able—to participate in the exchange of gifts and to perceive within himself the fruit of redemption.

Because it is essentially difficult for man to keep his balance, and because he has a natural tendency to exaggerate, there probably are some unfortunate results of the Liturgical Movement; but for its solid accomplishments, some of us in this country village are deeply grateful.

Tonight as we go out of our chapel there will be an almost full moon lighting up the patches of snow on the hillsides. May the words of the Collect of tonight's Mass remain with us, as part of our inward experience:

'Grant us, O Almighty God, so to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent, that we may deserve to be numbered for ever among the sheep that hear His voice'.

B. F. GARDNER

Norwich, Vermont, U.S.A.

3. BAD EFFECTS OF BAD TRADITIONS

Mr Griffith Bowen, of Ebbw Vale, writes in the 'Catholic Herald' of July 12 as follows:

SOME TIME AGO a few of my fellow workmen started to show some interest in our religion and I took considerable pains to answer all their questions and correct the many false ideas they had. One objection (a common one) was that Catholics worship

Mary instead of Jesus. In reply I pointed out that the main act of worship of the Church was the Christ-centred Mass, which I explained thoroughly; that Mary was highly honoured, since she was chosen by God to be the mother of Christ our Lord and God, but not worshipped; and that it was quite reasonable to ask our Lady and the other Saints to assist us with their prayers when we ourselves pray to God. Of course this took a little time to explain, but there were no insuperable difficulties since the Catholic case is plainly logical and appeals strongly to any mind that can be freed from prejudices. Eventually these men decided to attend Mass and Benediction one Sunday in their home town (it was not Ebbw Vale) to see things for themselves. During the whole Mass there the priest was inaudible. The whole congregation recited first the Rosary and then the Litany of Loretto throughout the service. During the whole Mass there was a loud noise from the back of the church of money being tipped into a collecting plate, while, at the Elevation of the Chalice, one of the collectors walked down the aisle without showing any outward recognition of what was going on at the Altar. At Benediction the Rosary and Litany of Loretto were again recited. On making enquiries my friends found that this was the regular pattern of worship at that church and are now firmly convinced that my talks were highly misleading since their own experience convinces them that the laity, at least, pay no attention to the Mass, but spend most of their time of worship addressing prayers to Mary. My work has to start again.

4 THE MASS AND THE ROSARY

'Jotter' writes in the 'Catholic Herald' of July 19:

THERE IS an excellent pamphlet by Dom Ernest Graf, O.S.B., 'On Prayer' (1s. 6d. from Buckfast), on every page of which I found something worth quoting. But recalling a rather violent conversation in Dublin recently with a very well-known priest who attacked this paper (wrongly) for condemning the recitation of the Rosary during Mass (in fact, we quoted the Holy Father in *Mediator Dei* at the foot of a letter), I decided to quote the following: 'This brings me to a very important point. I have been asked a

hundred times, if I have been asked once, what is the best way of hearing Mass? In the old days, before the liturgical revival, certain well-meaning men sat down and wrote divers methods of hearing Mass! Today even school children know that there is really only one way of hearing Mass—and that the best of all—namely, to pray the Mass with the priest, to watch and follow what goes on at the altar, to read the prayers in the Missal, to realize that you, whoever you may be, are offering this sacrifice by and through the ministry of your agent, the priest. Do not let yourself be robbed of your priceless treasure even by the best-intentioned people!’



POINT OF VIEW

I ONCE HEARD a long speech about a minor reform of the syllabus in which it was urged that as life was confusing a confused syllabus was good for the undergraduate. It got him used to it. The mixture of exasperation and amusement which I felt then I feel now upon reading Fr Pepler's article, 'Latin is still practical', in the June number of *THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT*, for his argument is very much the same.

There is to begin with something very wrong with his psychology. The truth is that like other educated persons he likes Latin. As he understands it he is able either to attend to the meaning, or to detach his mind and respond merely to cadences which his training had made recognizable and familiar to him, and which are weighted—heaven knows how they are weighted—with centuries of association. It is this and not want of familiarity which provides the mystery he speaks of. Let him hear Mass in Finnish, or Welsh, said very fast and I rather think that this connection of mystery with the merely unintelligible will not appear so certain to him.

But of course the pious Catholic is not unfamiliar with Latin. He knows it only too well and knows it as noises, not as meaning. The story of the server muttering, 'me a cowboy, me a maxima cowboy,' is not without its significance. Mere unmeaningful noises repeated Sunday by Sunday cannot fail to be dreary unless one is occupying the mind with something else—like saying the

rosary, or following some pious book of commentary on the action. Fr Pepler probably cannot remember when Latin was completely unknown to him, but he might use some imagination about the matter.

In the second place, I am surprised that a Dominican should fail to distinguish between understanding, in the sense of knowing what is being said, and understanding in the sense of comprehending; that is, of exhausting the potential meaning of a statement or an action. I may be said to understand a poem of Wordsworth's, its verbal form is simple enough; but this by no means suggests that there is nothing left that I can receive from or through it. And if Fr Pepler really thinks that a vernacular language is incapable of this central mystery then he had better impose on himself the discipline of reading a little poetry for his soul's health. Or even possibly the Anglican translation of the Psalms.

For, in the third place, the reasons for the use of the vernacular in public worship are a great deal more theological than he seems to recognise; they are the reasons why people commonly write poetry in their own and not in a dead language, why the matter of the Sacrament is Bread, why our Lord, the Divine Word himself the root, and type of all human speech, spoke not Greek, not Latin, not Hebrew, but the debased language of an obscure Roman Province. It is because a native language is the life of the mind, and the medium of a common life. What we unite with Christ's sacrifice is the offering of what we are, what personal, and what national, and what cultural history has made us. We also offer him the world in which we live—our ordinary speech carries all this because it has the same history as ourselves. Latin does not. It is acquired, and what is more, it is a dead language, it has no colour, no complexity which is not of the past. It is a language of the cloister, not of the world, and the cross, I might remind Father Pepler, was very much of the world, and is of it still.

I object to the attitude not because it is conservative and excessively sacerdotal but because it is essentially Puritan. Touch not, see not, handle not—and for heaven sake let us not expose the mysteries of religion to the coarse touch of common speech.

VALERIE PITT

Newnham College, Cambridge.

FR CONRAD PEPLER writes:

Ignoring Miss Pitt's judgment on my psychology and my religious attitude, I would ask her whether she thinks that those who flock to the Glyndebourne Festival without knowledge of Italian or German are unable to assist at the operas there performed. The sounds and actions as well as the general setting of scenery and colour are, in my opinion, sufficient for their participation in the dramatic action on the Glyndebourne stage. When the ordinary Catholic can be drawn to the Mass with the same enthusiasm and appreciation of the action, then he can set about acquiring a knowledge of Latin in order to deepen his participation in the Liturgy. But as he usually lacks any true sense of 'mystery' he has little chance of appreciating the dramatic action of the Mass. My contention is that to attempt to give people a greater participation in the Mass by putting it into the vernacular is to attempt to put the cart before the horse. Perhaps this reveals something wrong in my psychology and a strain of Puritanism, but it seems an obvious conclusion, especially if one studies the post-Reformation treatises on the Mass.



REVIEWS

RELIGION AND THE PSYCHOLOGY OF JUNG. By Raymond Hostie, S.J.
Translated by G. R. Lamb. (Sheed and Ward; 16s.)

This book summarizes the 'official writings' of C. G. Jung in chronological sequence, and with considerable care and penetration. It gives us, first of all, a succinct, clear and mostly reliable account of Jung's methods and findings in the field of psychology and psychotherapy generally. Then, later, of the evolution of his work and hypotheses in the psychology of religion. These expository pages are as a rule brilliantly, done.

It should be clear, from Fr Hostie's own account, that Jung's work calls for the criticism and verification which is required by any science which claims to observe facts and to correlate them by means of concepts and general hypotheses. Its implications for human health and religion make the task all the more urgent. But such criticism can hardly be helpful unless it pursues similar empirical methods: examines the alleged facts themselves, seeks other relevant facts, asks whether the classification by concepts is valid and adequate, and whether the

working hypotheses really work, or could be replaced by better ones.

All this Fr Hostie seems to recognize, but it is not the line he himself pursues. Instead of meeting Jung on his own ground, he soars to philosophical altitudes and drops his bombs from some stratosphere where even philosophers may find it hard to trace his own position. The bombs are devastating, but they often miss—and often seem hardly to be aimed at—the target which his own reconnaissance had so carefully pin-pointed.

He could legitimately urge that empirical field-work and verification was not his business as a priest and a theologian. But neither does he show too clearly where and how Catholic faith and practice meet Jung's work in any constructive fashion, nor how they can meet its challenge. He successfully shows that Jung is no reliable exponent of, or apologist for, the Catholic faith; but who had supposed he was? He can even complain that Jung's work on the symbol of the Trinity (which of course is concerned solely with its psychological function) 'brings neither believers nor unbelievers a jot nearer to the understanding of the dogma'. It hardly needed so painstaking a book to show that Jung does not and could not make so stupid a claim.

But having laid these ghosts, and having re-read his own lucid account of what Jung is really about, Fr Hostie could give us a valuable and constructive critique of Jung's work. There is plenty of relevant and intelligent comment in this present volume to suggest that it could be an important contribution to this much-needed task.

VICTOR WHITE, O.P.

PURPLE TIMES. By Michael Hollings. (Burns and Oates; 6s.)

Anyone who knows the author will naturally expect the solid meat of doctrine to be set before him in this book. And he will not be disappointed in his expectations. Fr Hollings nourishes his readers lavishly, but there is no danger of falling into the sleepy stupor of the over-fed. The doctrinal teaching may be solid, but presented as it is with a sensitive and accurate appreciation of Holy Scripture, it has nothing of the dryness and stodginess of the manual approach.

The book consists of a number of conferences given to different Catholic groups on the twin 'scandals' of the Crib and the Cross. Considering the liturgical setting of the meditations, its publication just before Easter might seem a little infelicitous (the belated review in these pages, however, is entirely the fault of the reviewer), but criticism on that score would be a mere quibble. This book is current at any time in these days when mankind is being asked in no uncertain manner to choose between the symbol of the Cross with its message of love,

hope and peace, and the symbol of the mushroom-shaped cloud with its tidings of hate, despair and destruction.

There are two points of criticism. Mr Peter Cheyney was a master of the colourful and epigrammatic book-title, but Mr Cheyney was quite unique in that respect. The book is prefaced by the author's reflections on the vanities of this world occasioned by a walk through London. No doubt the writing of this chapter did him some good, but having got it out of his system he would have been better advised to throw it into the waste-paper basket. What could be more chaste and demure than the wink of the strawberry-blonde who invites us to 'Enjoy life with Milk'? (She is not, by the way, a film star.) And perhaps the spiritual life of more than a few of us would 'revive on it, thrive on it, good wholesome beer, the best long drink in the world'.

MURDOCH SCOTT, O.P.

1. THE ROOTS OF THE REFORMATION. By Karl Adam.

2. MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY. By F. J. Sheed.

3. CONFESSION. By John C. Heenan.

Canterbury Books (Sheed and Ward; 3s. 6d. each.)

This new series of short, informative guide-books to the essentials of Catholic teaching is designed primarily for the modern religious pilgrim who wants to know where he ought to be going and what he ought to be up to. For such a person, we are told, the Catholic Church is a challenge, for she claims to give a clear, definitive and unique answer to that kind of question.

A description in these terms would lead one to expect a number of controversial or narrowly catechetical little books of apologetics, in the worst sense of that misused word. Fortunately the first three volumes in the series give one hopes that this will not be so, but that may be because they are extracts from books already published primarily for the Catholic reader.

The first of these Canterbury Books is a large extract of some eighty pages from *One and Holy*. Its appeal will be limited to a fairly intelligent and educated section of the public; it would be difficult to find a more succinct and yet penetrating study of the mystery of Luther. The second forms the central portion of Dr Sheed's *Society and Sanity*, and is wholly admirable. It is theologically and psychologically sane, with a freshness of spirit and not a little humour. It is unreservedly recommended to all engaged and young married couples and to any marriage counsellor who may have overlooked it in its original form. The third book is an abridged version of Bishop Heenan's *Priest and Penitent*. No sneering criticism is intended in saying that this will probably

be of most help to simple people whose lives, hard as they may be, are not complicated by any deep, reflective thought.

It is to be hoped that the authors of the volumes that are to be specially written for the series will support the view that the best way to invite non-Catholics to an acceptance based on love as well as knowledge of the fulness of the faith within the Catholic Church is by presenting the teaching of the Church in a way designed to help Catholics appreciate and understand better what they already believe.

MURDOCH SCOTT, O.P.

CHRISTIANS AWAKE. By Fr Gordon Albion. (Longmans; 12s. 6d.)

I hope no one will be put off by the outward appearance of this book. Its glossy plastic cover and even its title seem to be preparing us for something in the evangelical, 'muscular Christianity' line, something perhaps a little superficial and flashy. But open the book and you will find a mine of good things. Truly evangelical Fr Albion certainly is—both by the faithfulness with which he re-tells the Gospel story, and by his burning desire to spread its Good News. The book is a collection of his broadcasts, addressed as he says, primarily to the 'Great Unchurched'—but which (I may add) should not be overlooked by those of the Household of Faith. His aim throughout has been to foster in us that *awareness* of God which will lead us to love and serve him; so, except for one chapter at the end, a discussion of denominational differences lies outside his scope. The titles of the various sections will give some idea of his approach: 'God and You'; 'You and God'; 'You and Your Neighbour'; 'Just You'; 'Can God do without You?' Both language and matter are clear, personal and direct; and as befits his purpose, he is more telling in concrete and narrative passages than in the abstract. The section on Prayer ('You and God') is especially helpful. While this book will be of great value to Catholics, we may hope that it will be far more widely read. It should do much to deepen the life of faith and prayer of those who, though sincere Christians, are still outside the Visible Church.

F.R.

BRAVE WINGS. By Doris Burton. (Burns and Oates; 12s. 6d.)

There is no obvious attempt here to edify. Just the simple story of a most varied collection of people of eight nations. But it is quite inspiring. Perhaps if the youth of today would read it they would be the better for these splendid examples of simple unaffected brave piety. There is nothing mushy about any of these heroes. It is good solid wholesome meat. Thanks to Doris Burton the good is not interred with their bones, we hope.

DOMINIC SIRE, O.P.